

Amesbury

Open Space, Natural Resources & Trails Committee (OSNRT) David Viale, Chair

MEMORANDUM DATE: June 13, 2018 TO: Conservation

Commission

SUBJECT: Battis Farm Management Plan

It is the OSNRT's understanding that the Conservation Commission has requested the OSNRT develop a land management plan for the property known as Battis Farm. The Committee has been working on the matter and has an update and recommendation:

- In our research and compilation of materials we discovered there is an existing management plan which was developed in 1985 as a requirement of the property's initial acquisition via the LAND grant program (at the time it was known as the "Self Help" program).
 - After review of the plan and discussion with both the OSNRT and the staff of the LAND grant program, it is recommended that the plan be updated and enhanced for a number of reasons:
 - o The plan is over 30 years old and therefore outdated and should be revised to meet current goals, conditions and needs. Typically management plans for conservation land are updated every at least every 10 years or so (though there is always some variation on a property by property basis and the goals and management prescriptions);
 - o Existing records of the plan are incomplete resulting in gaps of information that was contained in the plan;
 - o The plan lacks sufficient information and detail to adequately manage the property in its current state and various uses (the old plan is limited to info on soils, hay production, and woodland management with no reference to recreational use, water quality, etc. (wildlife habitat section is missing), and things like community gardens, Camp Kent use, dog walking etc. were not contemplated or addressed.
 - o The existing plan did not develop/include a baseline documentation report which is a current requirement by the State of MA. Therefore an update for the baseline component is required.
- I've attached the existing plan (there is additional related info provided by the LAND grant staff in the PDF but the management plan starts on page 28). Also attached is a guidance template for the baseline documentation report.

The Committee unanimously recommends the Conservation Commission update and enhance the management plan. The OSNRT is willing to help complete this update and in fact, had made significant progress towards completing a new plan (per your request) prior to discovering there was an existing plan. We believe we have the expertise and capacity to complete a plan, have lined up the

assistance of MVPC staff for GIS mapping, and are ready to proceed upon your confirmation. We welcome working with the Conservation Commission and other appropriate City leaders and would also suggest including at least one round of public comment on the draft plan. An alternative option would be to consider hiring a consultant to complete it.

Please inform us of your decision on this matter so that we can proceed accordingly. If you have any questions or concerns the OSNRT would be happy to discuss with you in further detail. Thank you for this opportunity to provide a recommendation, we hope it is helpful.

David Viale, Chair, OSNRT 603.557.2755 davevialeemail@gmail.com Signature

6/13/18 Date